



# INSTITUTE OF OBJECTIVE STUDIES

NEW DELHI

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Dear brother/sister,

*Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah!*

We are happy to inform you that we are bringing out a memorial volume on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Independence. We have decided to request the eminent Scholars of different Indian Languages to critically examine their respective literatures during the last 50 years in the context of the major issues and problems of Indian Muslims & Islam. Your name has been included in the list of the contributors and we humbly request you to prepare a comprehensive article on

*A critical survey of the literature of the Independence*

and send it to us by 31st January 1997. We shall be obliged for the same

The article is to be written in English. However, if the article has been written in the regional languages, an English version of the same may also kindly be arranged

With Regards,

Yours Sincerely,

(Dr. Syed Abdul Bari)

Convenor : Committee for Language & Literature

۱۳ صفحات کا مقالہ مندرجہ ذیل  
موضوعات کے تحت مورخہ ۲۸ جنوری  
۱۹۹۷ کو ڈاک کے ذریعہ ارسال کیا  
جائے گا۔

To Prof Dr. M. T. Siddiqi  
50/12 Ashiyana  
4th main Vasantpuri Block  
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BANGLORE

## A CRITICAL SURVEY OF KANNADA LITERATURE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

- Prof. MOHD SIBGHATULLA  
MA PHD

This article is an attempt at making a comprehensive critical survey of Kannada Literature, especially by Muslim Kannada Writers, because very little was written by non-Muslim writers on any aspect of Islam or the life of Muslims during the period in question. What is more, after Independence, mostly derogatory remarks against Islam used to be made by non-Muslims, and 'Vikrama' a Kannada weekly Published and is still publishing - anti Islamic Stuff only. Defamatory articles and stories about Islam, too, were published, and character-assassination of Muslim historical figures was also done frequently.

I have arranged below, facts about religious literature first, the material of which is taken from an article by Dr. Ejazuddin Fairoze, followed by other aspects in succession.

### 1. Religion :

The holy Quran is the revelation made to prophet Mohd (S.A.S) 1400 years ago. It is the basic religious book of Islam. Islam made its advent in Karnataka even before Christianity had entered here. This became familiar to the Kannadigas through the saints. But many books were not written in Kannada related to this religion. Even the translations of holy Quran were started sincerely after 1947 A.D. The attempts made prior to this were not successful for instance the canto-I-Quran Kareem' published in 1929.

In 1950 two sincere attempts were made for translating and publishing the entire Quran in Kannada. Messers R.A. Kesari, Mohd Waliyaulla and Syed Ghouse Mohyuddin together translated the holy Quran in Kannada. It was published by the Academy of holy publications Bangalore. Its preface was written by the then Central Minister Ranganath Divakar.

In the same year Moulvi Syed Khasim Saheb translated the holy Quran's first five chapters into Kannada and titled it "Tejomaya Pavithra Quran" and it was published by Islamic Sahitya Prakashana house, Bangalore. This Edition contains the Arabic version too. It has also enough foot notes giving details. At the outset it has an Exhaustive essay on the translated portion of the holy book. Later the other parts were published. But the Entire Quran in its Translation did not see the light of the day.

Mr. Khan Mohammed Mohiyuddin of Bijapur Translated and published a few chapters of the Quran under the title "PAVITRA QURAN" in 1960.

Mr. B.M. Khlangodu of Mudabidra Published poetic Translation of a few chapters of the Quran under the title "DIVYA DARSHANA" in the year 1973. The fourth chapter also was published in 1974, in verse form. This task was carried on under the auspices of Divya Darshana Prakashana.

In 1974-75 the Karnataka Islami Sahitya Prakashana, Bangalore brought out the <sup>an ada</sup>keen translation entitled "Divya Quran" containing the original Arabic verses also. It saw the Second Edition in 1978. The persons chiefly devoted in this task were Mr. Abu Rehan Ahmed Noori, Mangalore. And Mr. Ejazuddin Janab Abu Rehan Ahmed Noori rendered the Arabic Ayaths into Kannada. Moulana Mohd. Farooq Khan wrote its preface entitled "What is Quran?" and Moulana Mohd. Abdul Hai contributed the essay entitled "Prophet Hazrath Mohammed (S.A.S) which contains the life of the prophet. This work has prefaced its 114 chapters with elaborate articles regarding their revelations and the subject matter. At the end of the volume there is a glossary of 147 most important words and definitions. The review of the translation was undertaken by Moulana Shaik Abdul Khader Saheb, Moulana Yousuf Saheb G. Abdulla Saheb and N. Abdul Gaffar Saheb.

This translation has been eulogised by many critics as "A milestone in Kannada Publication". This "Divya Quran" is a volume which provides the reader with the entire introduction of the prophet, Islam and the Holy Quran.

In the year 1975 Alhaj Mohd. Mohiyuddin Khan brought out the entire translation in Kannada titled "Tejomya Quran" in 3 volumes. The speciality of this translation is that it provides us with Kannada transliteration of the original Arabic verses. This is a great benefit to those having no knowledge of the Arabic.

In 1991 Shanti Prakashana, Mangalore published "Quran Vyakhayana - Vol.1" Second volume followed a few years later. S. Abdul Gaffar Saheb has rendered into Kannada the commentary in Urdu by Moulana syed Abdul Ala Moudoodi the general opinion about the Kannada translation is that it is difficult of comprehension and not easily understood by the common folk.

Next to the Holy Quran the life of prophet Mohammed (S.A.S) claims great importance in Islamic literature. There have been plenty of books on this topic in all Indian languages. As far as my knowledge goes Sri. C.K.Venkataramaiah, published a biography in Kannada titled Paighambar Mohammed in 1933 from Sathya Shodhana Prakatana Mandira, Fort Baggalore. The author says in his prologue " "Although Hindus and Muslims have co-existed in India for a long time, it is a sad commentary that there has not been proper unity among them. Yet these two communities do have people who behave very intimately and in a friendly manner. The rest have not yet made their hearts fertile enough to receive the sweetness of freindship into them. The reason for this may be that the Hindus have not understood the essence of the religion of Muslim and vice versa. It is the bounden duty of all those patriotic citizens to remove this short coming and make hindus and Muslims live together in a friendly manner. Prophet Mohammed was one of thos great men who have founded this religion. Re Reposing Holy feelings in that greatman and feeling myself on withom that religion I have written this book. This author has translated a few biographies of the holy prophet after Independence. In 1973 Muslim workers welfare Association, Bangalore published life of Yusuf in English and "Prophet Mohammed" in Kannada in one volume. This is an illustrious work. After this in 1985 Hindustan publications Madras brought out the Kannada Translation entitled "That Prophet of Arabic". The original book is in Arabic. It was Translated in to Urdu by Inayathullah Subhani and Janab Salam Shafi rendered it in to Kannada . This is a very sincere and excellent work from all points of view. Meanwhile prof. K.S. Ramakrishna Rao published the booklet entitled "Prophet Mohammed" which though small became very popular. Next to Biographies of the prophet his Hadees occupy an important place. The holy book was revealed to the prophet from Allah. The Hadees are the saying of prophets Mohammed which have been sincerely compiled by his companians (Sahabees) In 1969 Islamic Centre Mangalore published a Book namely "Anthya Pravadiya Amrutavani" (The sweet words of the last prophet) In it there are Hadees Translated by Mohammed Showkat Ali. This Author also has two books to his credit on this topic, One or two books by Abu Rehan Ahmed Noori. Oflate the Kannada Translation of Moulana Shams Peerzada's "Jawaharul Hadees".

Which is in English it contains only a brief collection of the sayings of Hazrath Mohammed (SAS).

Among books on Islam this author's work "Islam darshana published by Islami Prakashana gives an introduction of Islamic religions principles. After this in 1985 Hindustan Publications Madras Published the Book "Islam Sourabha". Its Kannada Translation has been done by Noor Mohammed. Then follows the work done on Muslim Saints. Of these the book that has been described as Mile stone in the life of Dada Hayath meer Khalander of Baba Budhangiri, Chickmagslore written by this Author. In like manner K.B. Moideen's Book on the saint of Ullal namely Syed Madni and Hazrat Abdul Khader Jeelani of Baghdad.

Besides these works related the Islam and its various aspects have been published.

A significant book pertaining to Islamic literature published during the 50's was 'Balidaani Hussain' (Hussain, the martyr) which narrates the life and martyrdom of Hazrath Hussain Ibne Ali (R), written by S.K. Kareem Khan, the famous Kannada folk songs compiler and singer. Over the past four decades a biography of the Holy Prophet (PBOH) in Kannada and translations of the Holy Quran and a few books have been published. In 1983 the translation of Abdul Ala Maouddodi's book "Ittehad-e-Islami Aalami" was published in Kannada, titled "Islam Sameekshe" rendered in Kannada by Dr. M.R. Gajendra gadkar. In the same year Maoulana Nadwi's "Islam, a Way of Life" was translated into Kannada by Abdul Majeed Khan and published by Moulvi Shamsul Huda, Tannery Road, Bangalore.

The Universal Peace Foundation, Bangalore, have published folders in Kannada and English. They are "Islam at a glance" "What they say about Islam" "What they say about Prophet Muhammed" "Life after Death" "Moral Systems of Islam" "The Message of Islam" "Message of Love" and "Human Rights in Islam".

In January 1993, close on the heels of the demolition of Babri Masjid the book titled "Rashtriyate Mattu Muslimaru" (Nationalism and the Muslims) authored by Fakir Muhammed Katpadi was published by Kottara Prakashana, Mangalore. It is a collection of three critical essays on Muslims and their cultural, social and national problems.

2. Muslim Kannada Writers :

Although the number of Muslims who went to Kannada Schools and studied Kannada in Colleges during the pre-Independence days was not insignificant, their contribution to Kannada literature was almost nil. The attempts made at Kannada writing were confined to stray pamphlets dealing with Islam or the Holy Qur'aan. The Post-Independence period, however, saw the beginning of the purely literary effusions of Muslims in Kannada, but chiefly in the realm of poetry and fiction. The first two Muslim Kannada Writers of this period are M.Akbar Ali and M.Jeevan, and the younger three are K.S. Nisar Ahmed, B.A.Sanadi and Abdul Majeed Khan.

It was only a few years since the State Re-organisation in 1956 that collections of poems, novels and short-stories of these writers were published. Though Mr. Akbar Ali Published a novel first, he later devoted himself to writing poetry and in course of time he published several collections of poems, limericks and his doctoral thesis on the "Vachana of Sarvajna". He was nominated Member of the Karnataka Legislative Council after his retirement as Professor of Kannada. A native of North Karnataka he has drawn much from the spoken idiom of that region, and his poetry has a proper blend of the local and the sophisticated language.

Of the latter group of poets K.S. Nisar Ahmed got greater popularity as a poet and published ten collections of Poems, dozens of translations of European and American verses. He is the first Kannada Poet who brought out cassettes of his lyrics. Latterly he published critical essays. His poetry reveals his intense awareness of the two cultures, scientific outlook and communion with the self. He has distinguished himself as a critic, a good translator and a remarkably thoughtful writer.

Being a Muslim, Nisar Ahmed often ponders over the religious practices and the social customs that divide the two communities. His poems "Rangoli Mattu Maga" (Rangoli and Son), "Rangoli" and "Amma, Achara Mattu Burkha" (Mother, Ritualistic practice and the Veil) are fine instances of this. He has successfully employed in his poems dozens of Urdu words which were formerly used only in conversational language.

Mr. B.A. Sanadi has to his credit 12 collections of Kannada Poems. He hails from a village in Belgaum District and has made Mumbai his home. His poems have a lyrical quality; many of them reveal his thoughtfulness which he expresses with a sense of deep feeling and mellowness and without any unnecessary violent outbursts. His concern for humanity and urban consciousness and his restraint are very remarkable. He has employed the terminology prevalent in the region to which he originally belongs. Besides poetry B.A. Sanadi has published collections of criticism, short stories, plays, poems for children, portraits and translations too.

Mr. Abdul Majeed Khan, who belongs to this group of poets, is in a class by himself. Unlike the others he went to an Urdu School first and then changed over to Kannada and finally studied English literature at his Degree and Post-graduate levels. Besides being a Poet, short-story writer and novelist in Kannada, he translated much from Urdu and published collections of poems (Mirza Ghalib, Sahir Ludhianvi, Makhdoom Mohiyuddin), short story collections (Sam Lall, Joginder Paul), and many more poems and stories of other writers.

He has so far published three collections of Kannada poems, two novels and two short-story collections besides publishing three collections of his English poems and two essay collections. Mr. Khan, too, has employed plenty of Urdu words in his poetry and prose writings.

If the hero in Akbar Ali's novel "Nireeksheyalli" (In anticipation) loves a girl from another community and encounters communal opposition, the hero of Abdul Majeed Khan's novel "Digantha" (The Horizon) suffers injustice in getting the merit he deserves in the examination and job opportunity in his home state only because he is a Muslim. He seeks a Job in another distant province but there too he finds most people hostile towards his community and religion. But he has the courage and conviction to contradict the false notions of those who fail to understand the genuine feelings of an Indian Muslim chiefly due to the misconceptions

perpetrated by the biased historians, the so-called patriots and pseudo-nationalists.

Imran, the hero in "Digantha" stands for finer qualities and broad vision. He is a fair-minded youth who, having regard for his own religion and tolerance for other religions, takes into the gamut of his thoughts and opinions almost every problem of the present day society: social injustice, communal bias at various levels, false patriotism, parochialism, hypocrisy, religious intolerance, chauvinism of all sorts, and what not ! Very sensitive and scrupulous he combines in himself all that is fair and humane. In a way he is unique. In fact it was Abdul Majeed Khan who first introduced the Muslim social background and themes in his short stories and delineated characters caught in the vortex of emotional conflicts and social disadvantages. His short stories, such as "Alegalu" (Waves), "Aalu" (The Servant), "Takararu" (Argument), "Koneya Drushya" (The Last Scene), "Naayi" (The Dog), "Dayamayi" (The Merciful) bear ample testimony to this fact. Abdul Majeed Khan is a fine prose writer, too. Being a student and teacher of literature he has always been meticulous in the choice of words and sentence structure. His narrative skill and expression show his consummate skill and the accomplishment of a master craftsman. It was his fondness for writing in English, too, and translating from Urdu that hindered his publications some of which are still in manuscript forms.

The chief trait of Abdul Majeed Khan's being a Muslim writer is that he does not fight shy of upholding the values he imbibed from his religion, his upbringing and the ideology he professes - that is, of a Muslim, who while following his religion never lets it be denigrated, even as he recognizes and has enough tolerance for all that is good and humane in other religions. His novel "Digantha" (The Horizon) is the best example of this fact.

It is commendable that the leading Kannada Journals, Magazines, and digests and small-scale periodicals, etc., published the contributions of the Muslims writers. It is rather inscrutable that the North Canara and South Canara regions did not produce even half a dozen Muslim Kannada writers until after a decade of the State Reorganisation.

The '70s saw a sudden spurt of Muslim Kannada Writers, most of whom were from Dakshina (South) Karnataka. Ms. Mumtaz Begum made her mark with her short stories and Ms. Sara Abubaker with her novels. While Mumtaz's stories centre around woman's trials and tribulations, Sara Abubaker's novels expose the injustices suffered by hapless Muslim maids and women at the hands of cruel men who manipulate religious norms to their advantage and to the utter detriment of women who are treated as chattle. Ms. Sara Abubaker became a target of public condemnation for her rebellious outbursts.

Among the men writers, Boluwaru Mohammed Kunhi and Fakir Mohammed Katpadi published short stories and novels. These two have already enough works to their credit in a short spell. Choosing representative characters from the community these writers describe their doings, the sufferings of the innocent and the injustices and tyranny inflicted on them by the members of the same community.

Of the Muslim Kannada poets who emerged during the '70s Ramzan Darga draw greater attention than others. He shows his leanings towards the leftist ideology. His first collection of poems viz. "Kavya Bant<sup>h</sup> Beedige" (Poetry came to the street) happens to be his unmistakable manifesto. His poetry voices concern for the proletariat, the downtrodden and the destitutes. It is completely divested of the traditional trappings and also modern technique. Though it looks bald, as it were, it is an expression of a deep feeling for the poor folk exploited over the past centuries and still continue to suffer inexplicable agony, misery, pain, injustice and atrocities at the hands of tyrants in the guise of masters and deliverers.

Of late many other young Muslim Kannada poets and writers both men and women have appeared on the literary scene. And it is to be seen how successful they will prove themselves to be !

Mention must be made here of the two significant Kannada Plays by non-Muslim writers, dealing with Muslim historical characters. One is "Tughlak" by Girish Karnad and the other is "Sultan Tippu" by H.S. Shiva Prakash. Whereas Tughlak is more of a character study of the clever and

cunning ruler, Tughlak "Sultan Tippu" is an attempt at Portraying the brave, noble and Secular Sultan of Mysore, who ruled Mysore at a critical juncture and was in fact the earliest freedom fighter and a great patriot.

It is indeed a redeeming factor that a few non-Muslim writers translated some of Dr. Allama Iqbal's poems into Kannada and published them in periodicals. A book titled "Rashtrapremi\* Iqbal" was translated by Ko.Channabasappa and published by Karnataka Sahitya Academy, Bangalore.

The Muslim Kannada writers referred to in this cursory survey have all been sincere in expressing their thoughts and feelings through their works. If they are critical of the community they belong to and of the society they live in they do so with a view to exposing the follies of human nature and hoping for an improvement or reform in due course. They do not hate their own religion and scriptures but they are sorry that these are being misinterpreted and misused, even abused, to suit the convenience of those who are either very rich or very powerful. The fault lies with the so-called custodians of religion and morals, who distort the teachings and philosophy of a great religion. The writers, therefore, cannot be passive spectators. They describe facts to that extent they are sincere and earnest. After all "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World", as Shelley defined them.

As are the Muslims of Karnataka or India, so are the writers of this region very tolerant, affable and well-meant. Their choice to write in Kannada speaks highly of their love for the land, its language and people. They have with their contributions enriched Kannada Language and literature.

Pointing out the Muslim cultural consciousness Dr. Basevaraj Sabarad\* says. "Just as Kannada literature has gained experience from Hindu culture, it has today embodied in itself experiences of Muslim and Dalit Cultures, too. Many of the sensibilities of Muslim culture that were hitherto unfamiliar to Kannada are today found in Kannada literature. Dalits, Shudras and Muslims have raised their voices in the new Kannada literature. Even as they well on the range and limitations of the races they belong to, they crave for the equality of the entire human community.

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...."Not that others have not written about the life of the Muslim community. But when the members belonging to that very community describe the Muslim culture it becomes more objective. From this point of view their writings have been classified here as 'Muslim contribution' and not by taking into cognizance their "Caste" as the basis for it. These experiences which are very fresh for Kannada literature are not merely confined to Muslim community alone, but they are the experiences of all other people, too. Hunger-poverty-ignorance-illiteracy which have pestered Muslim brethren have also pestered people of other communities. It becomes significant here to study these problems and ascertain how these problems have taken shape in the Muslim religious background. Because these experiences have been described by the writers of the Muslims Community they become genuine records of that race. Analysing the experiences, recognizing the limitations, and welcoming the novelty provided by a community which was hitherto neglected in literature and society, becomes a healthy gesture from the progressive point of view. It is as though literature and culture make way for fraternity.

"The tradition of Muslim Kannada Writers begins with Shishunala Shareef Sahab. Whereas Shishunala's songs follow the rhythm of the spirituality of Hindu culture, the works of the Muslims in the context of post-modern period makes familiar to the insights of the Muslim cultural life. Entering through the spiritual sphere, the Muslim writers have flourished in the social sphere. Their contribution in the post-modern context therefore has a very significant place in modern Kannada literature. The Dalits, the Shudras The Muslims and the Lambanis here have raised their voices authoritatively. They have, through Kannada letters, made familiar to us the other side of life.

As regards the sphere of novel two major divisions can be made of the Muslim Kannada writers. The first phase extends from 1940 to 1975 and the second from 1975 to 1988. The chief among the novelists comprising the first phase are Akbar Ali and M. Jeevan. Among the writers of the second phase are Abdul Majeed Khan, Sarah Abubaker, Fakir Mohammed Katpadi, Boluwaru Muhammed Kunhi, Asaf Ali and Banu Mushtaq,

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all of whom have made remarkable contributions. Mumtaz Begum however, seems to be the first Muslim women writer. But her novel 'Pardesi' (The Alien) was serialized in 'Taranga' weekly during 1989.

As the first phase was an introductory one, it can be said that no significant novel was written in that period. Akbar Ali's novel viz. "Nireekshayalli" (In anticipation) written in that period claims our attention. This novel deals with the problem of intercaste marriage; it points out the evil prevalent in society. The hero of this novel loves a girl from another caste, which becomes an obstacle to their marriage. The novel reveals the tyranny the caste consciousness creates.

M. Jeevan's "Hutatmana Hēndathi" (The martyr's wife) describes the lewdness/leachery of Yamunabai, the wife of a freedom fighter. But it does not have any merit to be called a good novel".

Dr. Basavaraj Sabarad chose four novels for his analytical essay: Sara Abubaker's "Chandragiriya Theeradalli" (On the banks of Chandragiri) and "Sahana"; Fakri Mohammed Karpadi's "Sarakugalu" (Goods); Boluwaru Muhammed Kunhi's "Jehad" (The Crusade), and opined that together with these Abdul Majeed Khan's "Andheri Nagari" and "Digantha" (The Horizon) may be named. Sara Abubaker's "Vajragalu" (Diamonds) too attracts our attention, he says.

"In Sara Abubaker's 'Chandragiriya Theeradalli' and 'Sahana', the life of the Muslim labour class has been effectively described. These novel which reveal the ignorance, pettiness, sacrifices and humane qualities of those poor folk, are like the definition of humane life itself Fakir Muhammed Katpadi's "Sarakugalu" besides telling how the poor Muslim girls become 'Goods' for the rich persons, points out the boundless nature of love, Boluwaru's "Jehad" dazzles with the stamp of revolt even as it condemns communal influences.

"Chandragiriya Theeradalli" describes the tragedy of its heroine Nadira, who becomes a victim to the misuse of the facility which "Talaq" offers in Islam. The cause for it here is not her innocent husband Rasheed, but her own father

who deceives<sup>el</sup> him to do so. The author suggests that "Talaq" is not applied as per the Quranic teachings but as a means for Muslim men's selfish ends.

In her second novel "Sahana" the same question is dealt. But here the heroine Naseema stands bravely against it. The innocent girl, by virtue of her determination and fortitude, seems to usher in a progressive reform in Muslim society.

Fakir Muhammed Katpadi's "Sarakugalu" tells the agonizing tale of the Muslim community in a very effective manner. While describing the ignorance, selfishness and revengeful attitude of the community men, Katpadi points out the gulf that exists between the rich and the poor among Muslims themselves. The author subtly suggests that 'Class' can be a major problem in the country than 'Caste' is. Caste consciousness is, of course, a major problem of the country, but more important than that is the question of economic inequality. The novel suggests it indirectly. The novelist has graphically narrated the misery the poor Muslim girls suffer when they are sold as 'Goods' to the rich Arabas. The poor girls like Nafisa and Hajima are exploited by their rich neighbour Saidu Koya on the one hand, and on the other they suffer another sort of exploitation by Mustafa, the rich man from Arabia. Here the exploited, the exploiters and those that abet it are all Muslims.

Boluwaru Mohammed Kunhi is quite different from these novelists. Even as he indulges in funny talk he lays bare the depths of pain. Instead of breathing fire against the horrible social set up and creating revengeful feeling, he regretfully emphasizes the inevitability of living. Owing to these reasons Boluwaru imprints the stamp of his speciality among the rebel writers.

The style adopted by these novelists and the expressions they have employed in their novels lend a novelty to Kannada. The process of communication between the Hindu and the Muslim cultures has given birth to many terms and phrases which have enlarged the extent of Kannada language. As these authors have rendered into themes the joys and sorrows of their community, naturally the language and culture of that community have been documented here.

These novels by Muslim Kannada writers are a significant contribution to Kannada literature. Looking at life of man having different cultural backgrounds and describing the irrepressible spirit of man in totality, extending human life, and while generating love of life, these literary creations which dazzle with a rebellious temperament, become significant human experiences of the postmodern period.

The contributions of all the writers mentioned above have been great and therefore have a ring of inevitability about them.